

Using Jump Back in Time Photos from America's Library to Complement Family History Timelines

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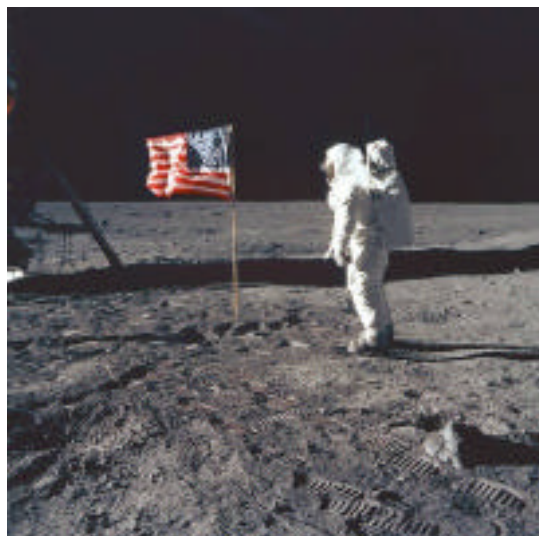
This past spring, our 350 sixth-grade students used the Jump Back in Time feature of [America's Library](http://americaslibrary.gov/) (<http://americaslibrary.gov/>) to complement a family history project. Students interviewed a family member to learn about his or her life and local, national, and world events that the person considered significant. The final step was to make an illustrated timeline depicting the family member's life and simultaneous events.

Teachers and I met to discuss the project and determined what the students needed to be successful. We chose America's Library, a Library of Congress site in a child-friendly format, as the main resource for photos, but the [class project web page](http://www.winona.k12.mn.us/wms/curricsites/history_and_citizenship.html) (http://www.winona.k12.mn.us/wms/curricsites/history_and_citizenship.html) also included a bibliography of picture books about the decades and links to other online resources, including an online encyclopedia.

Students had two weeks to interview a family member; the assignment was given prior to spring break so students would have more opportunities to interview family members living in other communities. After students completed their interviews, we introduced them to the resources necessary to complete their timelines, including *Timeliner* (Tom Snyder Productions), the software they used to depict the person's life and share their information with others. Jump Back in Time is organized by time period; for this project most students searched photographs and historical information in the "Depression and World War II" or "Modern Era" sections.

In addition many students scanned pictures from the picture books, saved them to their space on the server, and inserted them into their timelines. Others brought in their own primary sources to scan; most brought photographs, but others brought such souvenirs as travel brochures. My favorite was a 1956 Elvis Presley concert program, which the student proudly shared because "my grandma saw Elvis in person."

Students used at least two class blocks (80 minutes each) and out-of-class time to complete the technology portion of the project. The final step was an oral presentation and display of the timelines in the classroom.



"That's one small step for man...and one giant leap for mankind," said Neil Armstrong as he walked on the moon, July 20, 1969.

http://www.americasstory.com/pages/jb_1946-2000_subj_e.html

I love this project! Students become involved learners practicing a wide array of skills. Parents value the family connections; grandparents, aunts, and uncles enjoy reminiscing, and kids are surprised to learn what Grandpa did. And, of course, the students enjoyed the technology. I appreciate all of that as well as seeing kids browsing books of historical photographs, using a quality web site, and achieving success without hassle. *America's Library* is ideally suited for a project such as this because students can quickly find what they need without becoming sidetracked or frustrated.

This project can be as simple or complex as student skills, available hardware, and time allow. Just a few of the many possible extended or alternative activities are:

- Instead of using Jump Back in Time, students with more experience searching could go to American Memory's [Collection Finder](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/CollectionFinder) ([http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/CollectionFinder)

[collections/finder.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/CollectionFinder)) page, looking under either the Timeline or the Original Format: Photos and Prints for collections to search for appropriate illustrations.

- Students could use the Choose a Postcard feature of Jump Back in Time ([America's Library](http://americaslibrary.gov) > Jump Back in Time > Choose a Postcard) to send an electronic postcard to the family member they interviewed. If the family member does not have email, the postcard can be printed out.
- Students could use family artifacts or primary resources as props during their presentations.

America's Library has many other useful features. Check them out by logging on to [America's Library](http://americaslibrary.gov) ([http://americaslibrary.gov/](http://americaslibrary.gov)) directly or by accessing it through the [Library of Congress](http://www.loc.gov) ([http://www.loc.gov/](http://www.loc.gov)) home page (Library of Congress > America's Library).